

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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R 241630Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3920

INFO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 1796

LIMDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR PINR CH UR ML

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH CHINESE DCM

1. SUMMARY: CHARGE HAD THIRTY MINUTE TALK WITH CHINESE DCM TIEN TA-CHIEN MAY 21 AT WEST GERMAN NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION. TOPICS INCLUDED MALIAN POLITICAL PROBLEMS, SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN MALI, SOVIET PERFIDY IN DEALING WITH CHINA AND MUTUAL DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES IN BAMAKO, BUT ONLY REPEAT ONLY AT SIMILAR THIRD COUNTRY SOCIAL FUNCTIONS.

2. TIEN AND HIS INTERPRETER STOOD BEHIND A THIN SCREEN OF SHRUBBRY OFF THE MAIN PATIO WHERE HE WOULD NOT BE EASILY NOTICED EXCEPT BY THOSE WALKING OVER TO SHAKE HANDS WITH THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR, FAN TSO-KING AND WIFE. FAN IS ALWAYS EXTREMELY CORDIAL, GREETES ME IN ENGLISH, AS DID HIS WIFE, AND AFTER A FEW MINUTES I EXCUSED MYSELF TO GREET HIS DCM. WITH ONLY AN OCCASIONAL INTERPRETATION, I WAS ABLE TO TALK TO TIEN OUT OF EARSHOT OF THE OTHERS, PARTIALLY OBSCURED, BUT NOT SO FAR AWAY THAT IT LOOKED ODD.

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3. I ASKED TIEN IF HE HAD FOUND ANY EVIDENCE OF SOVIET

INVOLVEMENT IN THE RECENTLY FOILED COUP IN MALI. HE SAID NO BUT CLEARLY WANTED TO HEAR MY VIEWS. I RAN THROUGH THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE-SOVIET MILITARY INSTRUCTORS WERE AT THE CAMP WHERE THE PLOTTERS WERE ARRESTED (AS ARE CHINESE); NO SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN NAMED TO BAMAKO SINCE THE FORMER'S ACCIDENTAL DEATH IN AUGUST 1975; RUMORED INVOLVEMENT OF SENIOR MALIANS KNOWN TO BE CLOSE TO SOVIETS; NATURAL SOVIET PROCLIVITIES TO OVERTHROW GOVERNMENTS, ETC. TIEN AGREED THESE POINTS WERE WORTH CONSIDERING, AND SAID ONE CERTAINLY COULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT.

4. I SAID THAT WE HAD COUNTED ABOUT 55 SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS IN MALI UNDER COLONEL KLIMENKO, WHICH WAS AN INCREASE OVER THE 33 MENTIONED PUBLICLY DURING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS LAST YEAR IN WASHINGTON. TIEN DECLINED TO OFFER A FIGURE. I ASKED WHAT THE SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS WERE DOING. TIEN REPLIED THAT THEY WERE PRIMARILY INVOLVED IN TRAINING MALIANS IN AVIATION, ARMOR AND WERE BUILDING AN AIRFIELD AT MOPTI.

5. TIEN ASKED MY VIEWS ON A RECENT STUDENT STRIKE IN BAMAKO. I RAN THROUGH THE BASIC FACTS, AS WE KNOW THEM, AND SAID IT LOOKED MORE LIKE BAD JUDGEMENT ON THE PART OF STUDENTS, STAFF AND POLICE, COUPLED WITH END-OF-TERM HIGHJINKS, THAN ANYTHING POLITICAL. TIEN AGREED.

6. TIEN ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT ABOUT THE PREVIOUS NIGHT'S OPENING OF A SOVIET PHOTO EXHIBIT ON SOVIET AGRICULTURE. WE BOTH LAUGHED AND AGREED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD NO REASON TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THEIR AGRICULTURE. I SAID IT FAILED EACH FALL AND THEY WERE DEPENDENT ON THE US FOR GRAIN IMPORTS. TIEN GAVE HIS OWN VERSION OF THE FAILURES OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE. I SAID WITH A GRIN THAT THE GREATEST THREAT THE US COULD MAKE AGAINST THE USSR WOULD BE TO THREATEN TO COLLECTIVIZE US AGRICULTURE ON SOVIET LINES. THEN THEY WOULD HAVE TO ADOPT OUR SYSTEM TO FEED THEMSELVES. TIEN ROARED WITH LAUGHTER.

7. TIEN QUESTIONED THE VALUE OF DETENTE, IN A MILD  
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WAY. I SAID THAT THE SOVIETS UNFORTUNATELY HAD THE MEANS TO DESTROY THE US DURING ANY TWENTY MINUTE PERIOD THEY CHOSE. WE ALSO HAD THE SAME CAPABILITY. THEREFORE IT WAS NECESSARY TO WORK TO AVOID THIS POSSIBILITY OF MUTUAL DESTRUCTION. BUT THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE CONTINUED. THE SOVIET SYSTEM AND SOVIET GOALS WERE UNACCEPTABLE TO AMERICANS. TIEN SAID THAT GIVEN THE SOVIETS' DEPENDENCE ON US FOOD SUPPLIES, IT WAS UNLIKELY THEY WOULD ATTACK US.

I SAID I HOPED THAT WAS TRUE. TIEN TALKED ABOUT SOVIET AND TSARIST OCCUPATION OF CHINESE TERRITORY, SOVIET PERFIDY, ETC.

8. I THEN SAID THAT WOUR RELATIONS WITH THE PRC WERE BETTER; THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF A WAR BETWEEN US. WE HAD DIFFERENT VIEWS, BUT THESE HAD BEEN SET DOWN IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE WITH COMPLETE HONESTY. I SAID THAT I HOPED RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WOULD CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. TIEN PICKED THIS UP AND QAS QUITE UP-BEAT, TALKING ABOUT IMPROVING RELATIONS IN THE COMING YEARS. I SAID THAT I HOPED WE COULD ALSO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS IN BAMAKO. TIEN SMILED AND SAID WITH QUIET EMPHASIS, THAT HE TOO HOPED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS IN BAMAKO, BUT ONLY AT FUNCTIONS SUCH AS THE ONE WE WERE AT. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO THAT. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY. WE SHOOK HANDS AND PARTED.

9. COMMENT: I BELIEVE THE CHINESE HAD SET UP THIS MEETING IN ADVANCE. IT WAS A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR A LONG, UNINETRRUPTED TALK WITH TIEN. A FUED BETWEEN THE WEST GERMAN AND SOVIET EMBASSIES RESULTED IN ONLY ONE SOVIET BEING INVOTED, AND HE LEFT QUICKLY. THE EAST GERMAN CHARGE SAW US TALKING AND WILL REPORT TO THE SOVIETS. OTHERWISE, IT WAS PERFECT.

10. THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR HAS DECLINED MY SUGGES- TIONS THAT HE HOST A GERMAN-CHINESE-AMERICAN LUNCH, AND AN UNSOLICITED ATTEMPT BY THE EGYPTIAN FOR A LUNCHEON ALSO CAME TO NAUGHT. WHILE A SIMILAR OPPORTUNITY WILL PROBABLY NOT ARISE FOR SOME TIME, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE DEPARTMENT COULD PROVIDE SOME TOPICS OR TALKING POINTS SHOULD I TALK AT LENGTH WITH TIEN OR THE AMBASSADOR AGAIN.

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## Message Attributes

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